

Message Text

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ORIGIN EA-04

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /005 R

66615

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APPROVED BY EA/PRCM:TSBROOKS

EA/TB:VOLTOMSETH (SUBS)

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R 232023Z JUL 74

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

INFO RUMJDH/AMCONSUL HONG KONG 7111

USLO PEKING

S E C R E T STATE 159538

FOL REPEAT BANGKOK 11396 SENT ACTION SECSTATE

VIENTIANE INFO PHNOM PENH SAIGON JUL 15

QTE

S E C R E T BANGKOK 11396

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINS, PINT, TH, LA

SUBJECT: COMMENTS OF FOREIGN MINISTER CHARUNPHAN ON LAOTIAN
SITUATION

1. DURING AMBASSADOR KINTNER'S APPOINTMENT WITH FOREIGN
MINISTER CHARUNPHAN ON JULY 12, THE FOREIGN MINISTER AND
DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER CHATCHAI COMMENTED BRIEFLY UPON
THE LAOTIAN SITUATION. (NOTE: THIS CONVERSATION OCCURED
BEFORE SOUVANNA PHOUMA'S HEART ATTACK
LATER THAT DAY.)

2. CHATCHAI EXPRESSED GREAT SATISFACTION OVER PRIME MINISTER
SOUVANNA PHOUMA'S STATEMENT THAT NORTH VIETNAMESE TROOPS
SHOULD WITHDRAW FROM LAOTIAN TERRITORY. HE NOTED THAT THE
PUBLIC ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF THESE FORCES BY SOUVANNA PHOUMA
WAS VERY IMPORTANT. CHARUNPHAN AGREED WITH THE AMBASSADOR

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THAT THAIS AND OTHERS SHOULD SEIZE THE INITIATIVE BY

PUBLICLY MAKING WITHDRAWAL OF NORTH VIETNAMESE FORCES
FROM CAMBODIA AND LAOS A PRIOR CONDITION FOR WITHDRAWAL
OF U.S. FORCES FROM THAILAND.

3. THE FOREIGN MINISTER EXPRESSED CONCERN ABOUT THE
SITUATION IN LAOS, HOWEVER, AND CHARACTERIZED IT AS
"NOT GOOD". HE SAID HE WAS PARTICULARLY WORRIED ABOUT
THE LEADERSHIP OF THE VIENTIANE SIDE AND HAD RESERVATIONS
ABOUT THE APPARENT FAVORING OF DEFENSE MINISTER SISOUK
BY THE U.S. DRAWING ON HIS OWN PERSONAL KNOWLEDGE AND
EXPERIENCE IN LAOS, HE SAID HE THOUGHT SISOUK WOULD HAVE
GREAT DIFFICULTIES IN CONTROLLING OLDER, LONG-ESTABLISHED
POLITICIANS ON THE VIENTIANE SIDE. HE SUGGESTED A MORE
RESPECTABLE FIGURE WAS NEEDED, BUT PROPOSED NO CANDIDATES
WHEN QUERIED ON THIS SUBJECT BY THE AMBASSADOR.
KINTNER

UNQTE
KISSINGER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: TROOP DEPLOYMENT, POLITICAL SITUATION, DEPARTMENTAL TELEGRAMS, COMMUNIST FRONT ORGANIZATIONS, FORCE & TROOP LEVELS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 23 JUL 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: boyleja
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974STATE159538
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: DLFIELD, JR., :CED
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740199-0999
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740724/aaaaaune.tel
Line Count: 80
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN EA
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: boyleja
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 10 JUL 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <10 JUL 2002 by boyleja>; APPROVED <20 FEB 2003 by boyleja>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: COMMENTS OF FOREIGN MINISTER CHARUNPHAN ON LAOTIAN SITUATION
TAGS: PFOR, PINS, PINT, ACOM, TH, LA, (SOUVANNA PHOUMA)
To: BANGKOK
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005